

of the last premolar, and m^2 is equally broad. On the other hand, these two molars are not so compressed antero-posteriorly as in *S. achradophilum*, and the internal gap between them is broader. Finally, m^3 is far smaller than in *S. rufum*, not exceeding in transverse section one of the small outer incisors. Lower teeth as in *S. achradophilum*, except for their rather greater size.

Palatal emargination narrow, parallel-sided, extending forwards to the level of the middle of m^1 .

External characters very much as in *S. achradophilum*, except that the colour is darker and more uniform, the head being dull brown, like the rest of the body.

Dimensions of the type, an adult female in spirit:—

Head and body 58 millim.; ear, above crown, 12; forearm 46 (=1·8 inch); lower leg 18.

Teeth: distance from front of canine to back of m^2 7·0 millim.; palatal breadth, outside m^1 9·5, inside m^1 3·9.

Hab. Island of Dominica, West Indies. Collected, under the auspices of the West-Indian Exploration Committee, by Dr. H. A. A. Nicholls, in whose honour I have much pleasure in naming the species.

S. Nicholli is interesting as being the first of the rare genus *Stenoderma* found in the Lesser Antilles, *S. achradophyllum* being, so far as is yet known, a native only of Jamaica and Cuba, while *S. falcatum* is peculiar to the latter island. The habitat of *S. rufum* is unknown.

LXIII.—*On Pherusa fucicola*, Leach, and the Law of Priority. By R. I. POCOCK.

THERE are few zoological systematists who can say with Mr. Walker that they have destroyed more species than they have made. For this all carcinologists must be grateful; but most of them will, I think, feel regret at his decision in the case of *Pherusa fucicola*, as set forth in the last number of the 'Annals.' It seems to me that the position he has taken up is on any grounds absolutely untenable; and since he has courteously mentioned my name in connexion with his investigation (although the entire credit of the matter is due to him), it is possible that I may be suspected by some of agreeing with his views on the point. I consequently take this opportunity of repudiating once and for all on my own behalf such a system of nomenclature as that which he adopts, and of attempting briefly to show in what, to my mind, the faults of it mainly consist.

Omitting most of the synonyms, which for my present purpose are of no importance, the history of the genus and species may be briefly told as follows:—

It was first described in 1814* by Leach in the appendix to the article “Crustaceology” of the Edinb. Encycl., and subsequently, but not in the same terms, in the Trans. Linn. Soc. for the following year.

In 1830, in the Ann. Sci. Nat., Milne-Edwards described two species of Amphipoda—one named *Amphithoë Jurinei* and the other *Gammarus* (now *Gammarella*) *brevicaudatus* (a)—this last being, as Mr. Walker has shown, Leach’s *Ph. fucicola*.

In 1862, in the Cat. Amphipoda of the Brit. Mus., Spence Bate wrongly described as *Ph. fucicola*, Leach, a species identical with *Amphithoë Jurinei*, M.-Edw., giving *Amphithoë Jurinei*, M.-Edw., as a synonym of it. In the same volume he also redescribed *Gammarella brevicaudata*, but of course without discovering that it was Leach’s *Ph. fucicola*.

In 1863 †, in vol. i. of the Brit. Sessile-eyed Crust., Bate, in conjunction with Westwood, again describes *P. fucicola*; but on this occasion he characterizes, although not accurately, the right species, and gives a figure, although an inaccurate one, of Leach’s type specimen. He does not discover, however, that his *Ph. fucicola* of 1863 is different from his *Ph. fucicola* of 1862.

To these errors committed by Spence Bate may be traced the synonymical labyrinth through which Mr. Walker has so skilfully and carefully brought us. But after trustfully following him so far, I sincerely regret that at this point we must part company. He prefers to follow a by-path which I am convinced will ultimately involve him and his followers in a maze, if possible, greater than that from which he has just escaped; while I am compelled to keep to the road along which the law of priority points—a law which is to me as a law of the Medes and Persians. Fortunately, owing to Mr. Walker’s safe guidance, the road ahead is perfectly obvious, and leads inevitably to the following conclusions:—(1) That *Pherusa fucicola* of Leach, 1814 ‡, and of Bate, 1863, must

* Without going into the matter, I follow Mr. Stebbing in his opinion as to the date of this work.

† This is the date that the Museum copy of this work bears. I here use the dates to designate the different works, irrespective of the dates of publication of the separate parts of the ‘Sessile-eyed Crustacea.’

‡ I am thus particular with the date because of the possibility of its ever being suggested that the *P. fucicola* of the Linn. Trans. (1815) may be different from the one described in the Encycl. of 1814. Such a suggestion, it seems to me, would not be altogether unreasonable, for the

stand as a genus and species of which *Gammarella brevicaudata*, *Normanni*, &c. are synonyms; (2) that *Amphithoë Jurinei* must be the name for the species which Bate in 1862 described as *P. fucicola*.

Having thus extricated ourselves, let us turn back for a moment and follow Mr. Walker along his path. His choice of it has evidently been taken in the hopes that it will enable him to circumvent the ruinous edifice of synonymy which blocks the way on the highroad; perhaps, too, he has been influenced by the thought that he will thus shift the responsibility of pulling it down upon some one with less regard for his own head than he has himself.

So much for his reasons: now for his excuse.

It sometimes happens that an author will, for the sake of peace and quietness, abstain from upsetting a recognized system of names, although he knows it to be rotten to the core, excusing himself on the trumpery plea that the correct name for an object is the name that has been most often used for it or that by which it is most commonly known*. But, to do Mr. Walker justice, he shelters himself under no such flimsy a covering as this. He boldly meets on their own ground those who attack him with the law of priority, brandishing in their faces another rule of the British Association. This rule, as he has told us, is in substance this:—No name can acquire authority until it be defined, definition being the distinct exposition of essential characters.

But what on earth does this mean? It is a thousand pities that the compilers of the rule did not give a distinct exposition of the meaning of the word *essential*. Essential for whom? and for what time? For Linnæus? for Mr. Walker? or for the zoologist of a hundred years hence? A knowledge of what is essential is purely a matter of experience. Therefore what is essential to-day may be absolutely inessential to-morrow; and consequently, in accordance with the rule, the names that are given in the nineteenth century may all have to be abolished in the twentieth, just as those who adopt and revere the rule (which I do not) must rechristen almost every species constituted by Linnæus. For it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that he who adopts a Linnæan name tacitly ignores the rule.

1814 description applies to the types and the 1815 one does not. At all events, I should be sorry for it to fall to my lot to refute such a belief.

* In that case a schoolboy should be designated in the roll-call by his nickname.

Clearly, then, in its literal sense the rule must mean that the description should be so exact as to differentiate the species from all others previously known and from all that will be brought to light in the future. But for all practical purposes this is impossible. All that those who hold to it can expect is that an author should point out such characters as are believed in his day to be essential. This I believe to be a legitimate, nay, the only possible practical rendering of the rule; and in accordance with this interpretation of it I maintain that Leach described *P. fucicola*.

This last assertion, however, requires justification because it is diametrically opposed to what Mr. Walker, who should know far better than I, says on the subject.

This author writes as follows (p. 421):—"The solitary species therefore on which Leach founded his genus *Pherusa* disagrees in almost every particular both with his definition of the genus and of the subdivision in which he placed it!" This statement is substantially true of the description published in the 'Linnean Transactions' for 1815; but it is not true of the *original* description which appeared a year earlier in the appendix to the article "Crustaceology" of the Edinb. Encycl.

If we turn to this description we find the genus and species characterized (allowing for the sake of brevity that the class and tribal names symbolize certain characters) as follows:— It is a *Gasterurous* (*Hedriophthalmatus*), *Malacostracous Crustacean* belonging to the tribe Gammarides and to the family Gammaridæ. This family and its genera are diagnosed in the following fashion:—

FAM. GAMMARIDÆ.

Last joint of antennæ composed of several minute articulations; upper pair longest, four-jointed; under ones five-jointed.

- a. Second pair of feet larger than first, with a compressed hand *Melita*, *Mera*.
- b. Four anterior feet nearly equal in size and form, with ovate hands..... *Gammarus*, *Amphithoë*.
- c. Four anterior feet with a filiform hand *Pherusa*.

To this, the first published description, we must in all fairness appeal; and this description is true of the specimens of *Pherusa* that Leach had*. Moreover, it enabled Leach

* I will not go so far as to assert that I should have described the hands as filiform, although as compared with the hands of, e. g., Leach's *Mera* their shape may well be expressed by the words. It is enough for all purposes that the statement is relatively true.

to recognize his specimens of the genus from his specimens of all other genera; or, in other words, it contains a distinct exposition of the essential characters. What more could be expected of him? Is the name that he proposed to be discarded (1) because his definition of it does not enable Mr. Walker to select the species from a collection of all the Amphipoda known at the present time to occur on the British coasts? or (2) because it has since been found that the male, which was unknown to Leach, has hands of a different shape from the female?

These it seems to me are the only two props that Mr. Walker has to support him; and I fear he will find it exceedingly difficult to maintain his balance on a two-legged stool of this description. But I trust he will abandon the attempt. It seems to me that he must admit that, in accordance with a legitimate and practical interpretation of an ambiguous rule, the genus may still stand as Leach's, for it can only be overthrown by an impractical rendering of it.

But to take the name from Leach and give it to Bate, as Mr. Walker proposes, is to add insult to injury by punishing the innocent to reward the guilty. Fortunately, on any plea, the transference is inadmissible, for Oken and Rafinesque have put in a prior claim for it.

But Leach's claims are incontestable; and those who swear by the law of priority, which ultimately must prevail, will say *fiat justitia, ruat cælum*—give Leach the credit of the name, no matter to what temporary condition of chaos the synonymy of the group be thereby brought.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Description of a new Species of Tristomum from Histiophorus brevirostris. By F. JEFFREY BELL.

AMONG the specimens in the collection of the late Mr. F. Day are some labelled as "Parasites from *Histrophorus* (sic) *brevirostris*, Madras." These are all examples of a species of *Tristomum* which is clearly allied to but is quite distinct from *T. coccineum*. The characters of the latter species have been so clearly stated by Dr. Taschenberg* that it is an easy matter to distinguish the new species, which may be called *Tristomum histiophori*. With a close resemblance to *T. coccineum*, it is distinguished by the absence of

* Abh. der naturf. Ges. zu Halle, xiv. Heft 3.